

...THIS IS SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK...

GOVERNORS TERRY BRANSTAD AND DAVE HEINEMAN...THE IOWA HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION...THE NEBRASKA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY AND THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE HAVE DESIGNATED THE WEEK OF MARCH 25 TO MARCH 29 AS SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK IN IOWA AND NEBRASKA. EACH MORNING THIS WEEK...THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE IN OMAHA/VALLEY WILL ISSUE A PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT FOCUSING ON A DIFFERENT ITEM EACH DAY. TOPICS THIS YEAR INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING...

MONDAY...FLASH FLOODING
TUESDAY...WARNING RECEPTION
WEDNESDAY...TORNADOES
THURSDAY...SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS
FRIDAY...FAMILY PREPAREDNESS

ATTENTION MEDIA...IN ORDER FOR SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK TO BE EFFECTIVE...MEDIA COVERAGE IS CRITICAL. PLEASE USE THE INFORMATION IN THE PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENTS IN YOUR NEWS PROGRAMS TO HELP PROMOTE SEVERE WEATHER SAFETY. WE ALSO ENCOURAGE MEDIA INTERVIEWS. PLEASE CONTACT BRIAN SMITH OR THE SENIOR METEOROLOGIST IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.

TODAY/S TOPIC IS TORNADOES...

THE COMBINED IOWA AND NEBRASKA TORNADO DRILL WILL BE CONDUCTED THIS MORNING. HERE IS WHAT TO EXPECT...

10:00 A.M. CDT STORM PREDICTION CENTER ISSUES TEST TORNADO WATCH FOR ALL OF IOWA AND NEBRASKA VALID UNTIL 11:00 A.M.

10:10 A.M. CDT WEATHER FORECAST OFFICE (WFO) IN SIOUX FALLS AND OMAHA ISSUES A TEST TORNADO WARNING FOR THEIR IOWA AND NEBRASKA COUNTIES.

A TORNADO IS A RAPIDLY ROTATING COLUMN OF AIR IN CONTACT WITH THE GROUND. A VISIBLE CLOUD IS NOT NEEDED FOR A TORNADO TO BE IN PROGRESS. SOME TORNADOES MAY NOT APPEAR TO EXTEND TO THE GROUND BUT ARE CAUSING CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE. TORNADOES TAKE ON VARIOUS SHAPES AND SIZES... AND MOST PRODUCE WINDS LESS THAN 120 MPH. HOWEVER...A FEW ARE CAPABLE OF PRODUCING WINDS OVER 300 MPH. SOME ARE VERY SMALL AND LAST FOR ONLY A MINUTE OR SO...WHILE OTHERS CAN BE A MILE OR TWO WIDE AND STAY ON THE GROUND FOR OVER AN HOUR.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR...

A TORNADO WATCH IS ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE WHEN

CONDITIONS ARE FAVORABLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TORNADOES IN AND CLOSE TO THE WATCH AREA. WATCHES ARE GENERALLY ISSUED FOR THE DURATION OF 4-8 HOURS AND IN ADVANCE OF THE ACTUAL OCCURRENCE OF SEVERE WEATHER. DURING THE WATCH...PEOPLE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO MOVE TO A PLACE OF SAFETY IF THREATENING WEATHER APPROACHES.

A TORNADO WARNING IS ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE WHEN A TORNADO IS INDICATED BY RADAR OR SIGHTED BY SPOTTERS. PEOPLE IN THE AFFECTED AREA SHOULD SEEK SAFE SHELTER IMMEDIATELY.

TO BE READY FOR A TORNADO...HAVE A NOAA WEATHER RADIO WITH A WARNING ALARM TONE AND BATTERY BACKUP. MAKE SURE YOUR FAMILY AND PEOPLE IN YOUR WORKPLACE ARE FAMILIAR WITH SAFETY PRECAUTIONS AND THE LOCATION OF SAFE SHELTER. REVIEW THE PROCEDURES AND PRACTICE THEM.

IF YOU ARE IN A HOME OR OTHER BUILDING WHEN A TORNADO STRIKES...MOVE UNDERNEATH A TABLE...WORKBENCH OR STAIRCASE. STAY AWAY FROM CORNERS OF THE ROOM BECAUSE DEBRIS IS USUALLY DISPLACED INTO THOSE AREAS. STAY AWAY FROM WINDOWS.

MOBILE HOMES...EVEN IF TIED DOWN...OFFER LITTLE PROTECTION FROM TORNADOES AND SHOULD BE ABANDONED. IF AN UNDERGROUND SHELTER IS NOT AVAILABLE... MOVE TO THE LOWEST...MOST INTERIOR ROOM AVAILABLE.

SAFE PLACES IN AN OFFICE BUILDING...SHOPPING MALL OR SCHOOL...INCLUDE INTERIOR HALLWAYS. CROUCH ON THE GROUND FLOOR AGAINST A WALL...COVERING YOUR HEAD WITH YOUR HANDS. LEAVE WIDE OPEN ROOMS LIKE GYMS...AUDITORIUMS OR COMMON AREAS OF SHOPPING MALLS AS THEY ARE UNSAFE.

IF YOU ARE CAUGHT OUT IN THE OPEN OR IN A VEHICLE NEVER TRY TO OUTFRAN A TORNADO ESPECIALLY IF THEY ARE NEARBY. TORNADOES CAN MOVE AT SPEEDS OF OVER 50 MPH AND CHANGE DIRECTIONS QUICKLY.

MANY PEOPLE MISTAKENLY THINK THAT HIGHWAY OVERPASSES PROVIDE SAFETY FROM A TORNADO. IN REALITY...AN OVERPASS MAY BE ONE OF THE WORST PLACES TO SEEK SHELTER FROM A TORNADO. SEEKING SHELTER UNDER AND OVERPASS PUTS YOU AT GREATER RISK OF BEING KILLED OR INJURED BY FLYING DEBRIS.

TORNADIC WINDS CAN MAKE THE MOST BENIGN ITEM A DANGEROUS MISSILE. IN ADDITION TO THE DEBRIS THAT CAN INJURE YOU...THE WINDS UNDER AN OVERPASS ARE CHANNELED AND COULD EASILY BLOW YOU OR CARRY YOU OUT FROM UNDER THE OVERPASS.

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